

**LITHUANIANS MEET  
GORBACHEV'S AIDE;  
SEEK TO EASE CRISIS**

# A SIGN OF MOVEMENT

## A Vote on Secession and a 6-Month Delay Are Seen as Possible

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MOSCOW, April 3 — President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's closest political ally conferred with a delegation of officials from Lithuania this afternoon amid signs that both sides were seeking a way out of the impasse created by Lithuania's declaration of independence and Moscow's refusal to accept it.

After the talks, between Aleksandr N. Yakovlev, a member of Mr. Gorbachev's presidential council, and the Lithuanian delegation, led by Deputy Prime Minister Romualdas Ozolas, another Lithuanian official said it was possible that the republic's Parliament might consider a six-month suspension of its March 11 proclamation.

And the Lithuanians repeated that they might be willing to consider a referendum on secession, as the Kremlin has demanded. Moscow says the Lithuanian Parliament's move to declare independence without first polling the republic is illegitimate.

### 'Talks About Talks'

Nikolai N. Medvedev, a member of the Lithuanian Parliament, said neither suggestion came up in the informal talks today at the Communist Party Central Committee. "I don't exclude that such suggestions could be made," he said. But some Lithuanians said there could be no question of retracting the declaration of sovereignty.

Mr. Medvedev, in close touch with the delegation, characterized the discussions as "talks about talks," adding, "they didn't make things worse."

Mr. Gorbachev, who said last Saturday that there could be no discussions with the Lithuanian leaders unless they repealed their declaration of independence, did not agree to receive the three-member delegation, but Mr. Yakovlev, his closest colleague on the Politburo, did so in his place, Mr. Medvedev said. The Lithuanians made several other unsuccessful attempts to get Soviet officials to talk to them, said Egidijus Bickauskas, the republic's new official representative in Moscow.

### More Discussions Today

Mr. Medvedev said the delegation would meet on Wednesday with Interior Minister Vadim V. Bakatin, whose ministry is in charge of the police.

The Soviet Foreign Ministry has banned all accredited correspondents in Moscow from traveling to Lithuania.

Continued on Page A8, Column 1

Combined with the arrests of Lithuanian deserters and other tactics, the moves created a mood of uneasiness in Western capitals just as Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze arrived in Washington for talks with Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d.

Mr. Bickauskas said the Soviet Defense Minister, Dmitri T. Yazov, told him over the telephone today that since Lithuania had declared itself a sovereign republic, he could not meet with its officials. He said he was not empowered to deal directly with foreign governments, Mr. Bickauskas said.

The delegation was particularly eager to meet with Mr. Yazov, since Soviet paratroops seized control of Communist Party buildings, printing presses and the prosecutor's offices in Lithuania last week and armored personnel carriers rolled through the streets of Vilnius, the capital.

Soviet border guards stopped most traffic at Lithuania's only crossing with Poland today, in what could be another move to increase pressure on the Lithuanians to back down.

One house of the two-chamber Supreme Soviet gave preliminary approval today to a law on secession that would require approval by two-thirds of the residents in any republic that

## A referendum and a suspension of the ultimatum are considered.

wanted to leave the Soviet Union, and a transitional period of five years to settle accounts and legal problems.

### 'A Law Against Secession'

The measure, approved today by the Supreme Soviet's Council of Nationalities, is expected to be considered by the Council of the Union on Wednesday and would then go before the next session of the ultimate legislative body, the Congress of People's Deputies.

Mr. Medvedev, the member of the Lithuanian Parliament, said: "This law isn't a law of secession. It's a law against secession."

And Mr. Bickauskas said: "It's a law that the Soviet Union obviously needs. But it's for republics that entered into the union. We were annexed." After the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939, which divided Eastern Europe into spheres of influence, the Soviet Union intimidated the Baltic lands, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, into accepting Soviet military



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A delegation from Vilnius conferred with a Gorbachev adviser.

bases on their territory. In 1940, Moscow's forces occupied all three Baltic republics, and they were incorporated into the Soviet Union after rigged referendums the same year.

In Vilnius, a spokeswoman for the government said the situation was quiet but the mood apprehensive.

Lithuanian newspapers supporting independence were still publishing, she said, although the Soviet press agency Tass said four of the best-known ones, printed on presses claimed by the loyalist Lithuanian Communists' Central Committee, would not be allowed to use them much longer.

### Delegation Is Rebuffed

Mr. Bickauskas also said Lithuania's Parliament would send a formal reply on Wednesday evening to Mr. Gorbachev's appeal of last Saturday, when he called on the legislators to "annul the illegal acts immediately" and warned that failure to comply "could have grave consequences for all of us."

Lithuanians in Vilnius said the delegation of Mr. Ozolas and two other Lithuanian legislators had tried to see the Soviet Prime Minister, Nikolai I. Ryzhkov. The delegation was reportedly rebuffed by functionaries who said they could only be received as representatives of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania, not, as they now consider themselves, representatives of the Republic of Lithuania.

They were particularly eager to see the Defense Minister, Lithuanians in Vilnius said. But Mr. Bickauskas said that he had spoken to Mr. Yazov by telephone, but that the Defense Minister told him, "You'll just ask me to give clemency to soldiers evading military service, so no talks are possible."

"There was no conversation," Mr. Bickauskas said.



Mr. Gorbachev may have hoped to ease the Baltic crisis by sending his top adviser to meet the Lithuanians. But Mr. Gorbachev's new press secretary, Arkady Maslennikov, said today that the Soviets were standing firm.

"All questions concerning the state system of this republic, its membership or not within the Soviet Union, can only be resolved on a constitutional basis," he said. "We are not in a state of war. The Lithuanian republic is a part of the Soviet Union. The people live there according to Soviet laws, which are being enforced by Soviet forces, including those acting on the territory of the Lithuanian republic."

The Parliament of the Baltic republic of Estonia, which is groping for a way of declaring independence that does not provoke the kind of confrontation that Lithuania set off, passed a resolution supporting its neighbor today, after a vigorous debate.

#### 'Matter for the Lithuanians'

"It is necessary to put an immediate stop to Soviet military pressure and political confrontations aimed at making the people of Lithuania give up their drive for independence and legitimize the occupation of the Lithuanian republic forever," it said.

In the debate today, an ethnic Russian deputy argued against the resolution. "This is a matter for the Lithuanian people, not for us," he said. "They supported deserters from the Soviet Army, which is unconstitutional."

The resolution passed, 71 to 22, with 1 abstention and 11 deputies absent.



Reuters

A close political ally of President Mikhail S. Gorbachev met yesterday with a delegation of Lithuanian officials in the first attempt at negotiations since the

republic declared independence. In Vilnius, Soviet troops arrived at the offices of the prosecutor to reinforce the military occupation of the building.